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The report proper covers 184 pages, and these are about equally divided between the conclusions and recommendations of the commission and footnotes in which are condensed the views upon these most vital questions of fifty-four of the leading educators of the United States and Canada. Among these collaborators with the commission are thirteen presidents of universities and colleges of the first rank. Seventeen superintendents of public schools in the largest cities of the union, and twenty-four professors in universities, and other specialists in the science of education.

The report is supplemented by twelve appendices upon such important and up-to-date topics as "Public Kindergartens," "Vacation Schools and School Playgrounds," "Parental Schools," and Pupil Government," and in appendix K there is "A proposed school law for the city of Chicago," in which the commission has embodied much of its most important suggestions as require legislation to render them operative.

From first to last no topic is carelessly treated, and it would certainly be difficult for a student of the general subject of public-school management to find in any pedagogical library so valuable a treatise—it is more than a compendium—as is this report.

It was to be expected that a second edition would be called for, and it is with very reasonable satisfaction that the chairman of the commission now calls attention to the fact "that many of the most important suggestions made in the report of the commission have already been adopted by the board of education of the city of Chicago."

Almost every session of that body adds to the truth of that statement.

A. H. NELSON

CHICAGO

English: Composition and Literature. By W. F. WEBSTER, Principal of the East High School, Minneapolis, Minn. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

TO THE teacher accustomed to a systematic rhetoric and to a hand-book of English literature, Webster's *English: Composition and Literature*, will appear revolutionary. Disclaiming any purpose of writing a rhetoric, Mr. Webster attempts only "to teach methods of simple, direct, and accurate expression"; and in his literature work he includes much standard reading, but not a date, a biographical sketch, or an outline of literature. In short, he tries to embody practically the general reforms in English teaching which progressive thinkers demand.

The course outlined includes three years' high-school work, reserving the fourth year for the college-entrance requirements and for study of the development of English literature. The first year's work takes up narration and theme-structure; the second, description and paragraphs; the third, exposition and argument, with study of sentences and words. This arrangement, while arbitrary rather than logical, seems the best in practice. The reading is so arranged that narration shall be taught by Hawthorne and Irving, description by Ruskin and Stevenson, exposition by Macaulay and Newman, and argument by Webster and Burke.

This admirable scheme of uniting literature with composition is, in the first part of the book, very well carried out. Mr. Webster gives a clear elucidation of the principles of narrative and descriptive writing, enforced by very well chosen extracts from authors of repute. The discussion of plot, with the quotation from Stevenson, is particularly good. The suggestions for theme-writing, at the possible risk of producing a somewhat mechanical style, give the pupil a definite sense of knowing what is

expected of him, and so effect what Mr. Webster urges us to give, a sense of power in return for work done.

The chapters on exposition and argument are not so satisfactory. The student would have much difficulty in deciding from them where exposition ends and argument begins; indeed, at the beginning of the chapter on argument, Mr. Webster seems to admit that he does not know himself. This suspicion is strengthened by finding on page 100, as a good subject for exposition, "A real partisan is no patriot," obviously a statement set up for attack and defense, however necessary it might be to expound its terms; and so not really a subject for exposition, but for argument. The so-called "Brief of Burke's Speech," too, is not a brief at all, in the strict sense of a chain of properly subordinated premises, logically supporting a conclusion. One wishes that Mr. Webster had developed the main principles of exposition and argument as ably as he did the preceding subjects, instead of diverting our attention to "enthymemes" and "undistributed middles."

The last chapters, treating of the elements of style, are simple and helpful, particularly the chapter on sentences. That great puzzle to a schoolboy, when to begin a new sentence, is solved beyond question of the dullest. Technical definitions, as of the figures of speech, are conspicuously absent, being replaced by practical directions for good writing.

A most useful part of the book is the scheme of questions and exercises, appended to each chapter. These lists will be a godsend to teachers who want to associate literature with theme writing in some organic way, but do not know just how. The questions on books read are not meant to be followed strictly, but to give hints for studying any book. They are a great improvement on the slipshod philology dear to some teachers. Pupils will enjoy, too, such exercises as the incomplete stories or the sketching descriptions which they are to fill in. Some of these are very imaginative, and should start in the slowest pupils a train of suggestions.

The book, as a whole, is cordially to be recommended to the secondary schools. Its defect, which are fortunately in treating subjects least necessary in schools, can be remedied by reference to such standard works as *Hill's Principles of Rhetoric*, or *Balser's Argumentation*. Its excellencies, in tracing rhetorical principles in good literature and then directly applying these principles to the pupil's themes, can hardly be found elsewhere.

ALLAN ABBOTT

WASHINGTON SCHOOL FOR BOYS

Physical Geography. By WILLIAM MORRIS DAVIS, Professor of Physical Geography in Harvard University, assisted by WILLIAM HENRY SNYDER, Master in Science in Worcester Academy. Ginn & Co. Pp. xvii+398.

Elementary Physiography. By ALEX. MORGAN, M.A., Lecturer in Mathematics and Science, Church of Scotland Training School, Edinburgh. Longmans, Green, & Co. Pp. vi+305.

THE second of these books presents the subject according to the English definition of physiography, viz., as a branch of science which has as its aim to give a general knowledge of the earth, what is on it, in it, and about it, and at the same time to